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ABSTRACT

The historical development and current status of multicultural education in Australia are reviewed, without, however, focusing on the education of Aboriginal people. In Australia, the term multicultural education is generally understood to exclude Aborigines, a distinction in which Aboriginal educators concur as they assert the unique identity and claims of the Aboriginal populations. The discussion in this paper focuses on the educational response to the massive post-World War II immigration program and the responses to the wide range of ethnic groups contributing to Australian society in the 19th and 20th centuries. There have been three discernible responses to multicultural education in Australia: (1) a move from passive to active assimilation; (2) from immigrant education to multicultural education; and (3) recognition of the economic imperatives of education. Multicultural educational research has considered curriculum reform, antiracism, English as a Second Language, and instruction in languages other than English. Economic pragmatism seems likely to determine the research agendas of the future. (Contains 92 references.) (SLD)

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